

Together Towards Allah

Part One

Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri



In the Name of Allah. All praise belongs to Allah and may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, companions, and those who follow him.

My dear Muslim brothers the world over,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu

I would like to shed some light here on a phenomenon that is both old and new, a phenomenon that is used as a tool to fight Islam and the Islamic creed: the call to atheism.

Atheism, historically, is an ancient phenomenon. The Quran has mentioned it on several occasions and Muslims have refuted the arguments of its callers ever since the time of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). Atheism, in spite of its antiquity, changes its shades and colours with the passage of time. However, its essence remains the same: Deviation from Divine revelation.

Here, I would like to point out that the atheism mentioned in the Quran is not restricted to the general conception of atheism that is prevalent specifically in our times, namely the denial of the Glorious Lord's existence. Rather, the concept of atheism that we find refuted in the Quran is sweeping and much broader in scope. According to the Quran, atheism encompasses all forms of deviation from Islam and the Islamic Shariah. Allah (swt) says about the Masjid al Haram, 'And whoever shall incline therein to wrong unjustly (*ilhaad*, lit. atheism), We will make him taste a painful chastisement.' And He says, 'And leave those who violate the sanctity of His Names; they shall be recompensed for what they did.'

This is based, in part, on the linguistic context of atheism, for in the Arabic language the word '*ilhaad*' means a deviant inclination or an abandonment of the objective.

Atheism, as a doctrine in the contemporary age, can be divided into two distinct types: The atheism of denial, which is what comes to most people's minds at the mention of the word. It implies a denial of Allah's existence. The second type is the atheism of denying God's Divine attributes and attributing these Divine qualities to the creation.

An obvious manifestation of this, in our age, are the secular systems that rule by other than the Divinely revealed Law. The proponents of this system defend it by saying that this partial secularism does not in any way oppose Religion. However, the truth remains that the proponents of secularism deny a name among the names of our Lord and thereby suspend one of His Divine qualities, namely sovereignty. As we all

know, Allah (swt) is the sovereign. He says, 'And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allah (He is the Sovereign Ruler). Such is Allah, my Lord in whom I put my trust, and to Him I turn in all of my affairs and in repentance.' And the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) says, 'Verily, Allah is the ultimate sovereign'.

Throughout history, atheists who deny the existence of God have been a minority. They have been on a backfoot in our times specifically, more so since the fall of Communism. However, the atheists who deny the attributes of God are the most deviant of sects, and it was against them that the Prophets and Monotheists waged most of their battles (as mentioned by Shaykh Syed Qutb in his work, In the Shade of the Quran). Today, I would like to focus on the atheism of denial.

My talk will be divided, God willing, in three parts:

First: This being the least important in my view, a brief refutation of the arguments of atheists who deny God's existence.

Second: The different motives of this type of atheism

Third: The political goals behind the spread of atheism among Muslims

Part One: A refutation of the arguments of atheists who deny God's existence

I shall try to keep this part of the discussion as brief and to the point as possible, since this aspect has been discussed in detail not just by Muslim scholars, but it has equally been debated by followers of other religions as well. In fact, atheism is rejected by human nature and the majority of mankind detests it.

I will divide my talk in this section, God willing, into three parts:

First: A brief refutation of the beliefs of atheists who deny God's existence.

Second: A brief review of the implications of their beliefs.

Third: An explanation of this refutation by the quotes of famous atheists who later repented and turned to Islam.

Before beginning with the first part, namely a refutation of their arguments, I would like to summarize the general beliefs they tend to have a consensus upon, in spite of their mutual differences.

The gist of their argument is that subjective reality- which they term matter- is independent of consciousness, rather it influences and shapes consciousness.

Matter, in their view, is an ever-present body that has weight and occupies space, and it is matter that everything is composed of. Matter,

in their view, is independent of any form of consciousness; in fact, consciousness is only a reflection of matter.

Matter is thus primary in existence and its influence is overarching, whereas consciousness is secondary, subject to matter. This is why all proponents of this school were led to the denial of God's existence, since, in their view, matter has no creator, and matter existed before anything else.

Moreover, the entire gamut of existence, with all forms of creation and living beings, came into being as a matter of chance, and there is no purpose or objective behind existence. Everything that is, is there as a result of a random chain reaction. The proponents of this view were labelled '*dehreeyeen*' or atheists by early Muslim scholars.

Julian Hexley says, 'If six monkeys were to sit on a type writer and press the keys randomly for millions of years, we might find in some of the pages a poem of Shakespeare. Similarly, the existing universe is the result of a blind process that has continued in matter for billions of years.' Bertrand Russel, the famous atheist philosopher, summarizes this illogical and ridiculous theory in the following words: 'Man is the result of factors that have no objective or purpose. His beginning, his growth, aspirations, fears, love, and beliefs are all the result of a coincidental mathematical arrangement in a universe composed of atoms. The grave brings an end to man's life; nothing can resuscitate him. All these efforts of centuries, these sacrifices, beautiful ideas and brilliant heroics shall all be buried under the ruins of the universe. If these ideas that I propose here are not definitive, they are, at the very least, the closest to reality as we know it. And if any philosophy attempts to deny this, it shall die its own death.'

This is how he sums up the gist of materialist thought: a universe without any purpose in which ideals and standards of good and evil disappear. And so the annihilation of humanity with weapons of mass destruction cannot be regarded as an act of injustice, since they are bound to meet their fate, one way or the other. I will refer to this aspect when we discuss, God-willing, the implications of nihilistic atheism.

The materialistic irreligious philosophical outlook that atheism represents was greatly influenced in its development by Darwin's theory of evolution. Though Darwin did not explicitly deny God's existence, he did propose that the evolution of man- from a tiny microorganism to his present state- does not presuppose the existence of the Creator.

Darwin suggested that the process of evolution was random and the fittest, in other words the mightiest, survived in the struggle for

survival, adapting to their surrounding conditions and outliving other creatures that didn't.

The Quran refers to the atheists who deny God's existence. Allah (swt) says, 'And they say there is nothing but our life on this earth, and never shall we be raised again.' And He says, "And they say: 'What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but time can destroy us.' But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture."

However, the greater battle waged by the Quran was against polytheism, since atheism has always been a passing phenomenon that has not recurred frequently in human history. Even the Soviet Union, which officially adopted atheism as its 'religion', collapsed after six decades, while China became a primarily capitalist state. As for the Warsaw Pact, you will find its reference today only in the archives of libraries, with most of its former members joining NATO.

The Quran most eloquently silences the atheists who deny God's existence, "Or do they say: 'A poet! Let us wait what time does to him. Say: 'Await! I too will wait along with you.' Is it that their faculties of understanding urge them to this, or are they but a people transgressing beyond bounds? Or do they say, 'He fabricated the message'. Nay, they have no faith! Let them then produce a recital like it if they are truthful. Were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators?" (30-35)

In these verses the Quran answers them with the following challenge addressed to them via the Prophet (pbuh), "Await! I too will wait along with you.' This is a challenge concerning the unseen, and Islam has definitely triumphed over polytheism. Similarly, the Quran challenges them to bring a parallel of the Quranic miracle, 'Let them then produce a recital like it'. The Quran then challenges them with the rational argument put forth in the following verse, 'Were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators?' And in this verse, 'Have you seen that which you emit? Do you create it or are We the Creator?'

This is so because the knowledge of the truth may be gained by one of the following ways:

- The way of revelation which has been proven by its inimical style, and this of course is the best way.
- Reasoning on the basis of human nature
- Reasoning on the basis of Allah's creation and the perfection of His design
- General deductive reasoning

However, inner tranquility and peace cannot be attained except by believing in and following the Revelation. As for the use of reasoning, it is for discovering the ways that lead to the truth, refuting doubts and countering the arguments of the opponents of truth.

As for inner peace, tranquility, and contentment, there is no way to achieve these qualities except by following the revelation of the Loving, Caring Lord as revealed to His Messengers, may peace be upon them all, the last and most honourable of whom was our beloved, our master, our guide to the truth, Muhammad, peace be upon him. It is about him that our Lord says, 'And if you follow him you shall be guided.' And He says, 'Then those who believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him: they are the successful ones.'

Every believer and atheist must admit that if the revelation is proved to have come from the Lord then it must be followed. Therefore, if an atheist says that he is not convinced by Islam or other religions because they exhort people to hatred, violence, and injustice, it simply means that he is nonserious. This is because when the command of Allah and His Messenger reach a true believer who is in search of the truth, all he says is: 'We have heard and obeyed.'

As for a serious atheist, he does not search for the wisdom of the religions because he does not believe, in the first place, in the One who revealed it. If he professes to believe in a God, he must follow His revelation. In truth, the only thing that definitely decides matters between mankind is revelation. If left to their intellects, each would claim to possess reason that leads him to true and essential knowledge.

With Allah's help, I would offer a brief refutation of the arguments of the atheists who deny God's existence. My refutation would rely on rational proofs, nature of man and the universe and the unparalleled eloquence of the Quranic texts.

As for the rational refutation, it is as follows:

Firstly: The creatures that exist in the universe, all have a beginning and an end, whether living beings or matter. New stars and planets are born and they eventually die or explode. Plants, trees, man... all are born and eventually die. The sun continuously witnesses explosions on its surface until its mass is reduced, like other stars, by millions of tons.

It is obvious that none of these creatures or objects created itself.

It must have a creator, for everything in existence is created by a Creator. Allah (swt) says, 'Were they created of nothing, or were they themselves the creators.' And He says, "Have you seen that which you emit? Do you create it or are We the Creator?"

It is irrational to say that everything in existence is eternal, nor is it rational to suggest that everything came out of nothing. Therefore, there must be a first cause or creator who was not caused or created by anything else. That being is the Lord, Who is Independent in His existence and Who does not need anyone for Him to exist. Allah (swt) says, 'Allah, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting, Eternal.'

Secondly: Everything that exists may either be existent or non-existent. If person X's parents had not married, he would have been non-existent, hence it was possible for him to exist or not to exist. And so everything that exists needs something that may bring it into existence. It is irrational to say that Mr. X is the one who brought himself into existence, for this would require him to be existent before he came into existence, which is an obvious fallacy. Hence, there must be the First Cause whose existence is independent of everything else. That being is obviously the Lord, Whose existence is totally independent. His existence was not preceded by any other existence and it was not probable, but definitive and necessary for everything else to exist.

Thirdly: Everything that exists depends on something else for it to come into existence. Seeds cause plants to grow, while fruits cause seeds to sprout, and so the cycle of causation continues. Everything in existence has a cause for it to come into existence. It is impossible to accept that the existing- which is limited by a beginning and an end, and may or may not exist itself- is the cause of its own existence. Logic does not admit any possibility except that there should a first cause for all that exists. And this first cause must itself be independent of the chain of causation and not rely on anything to bring it into existence. Allah (swt) says, 'He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent: and He has full knowledge of all things.'

Fourthly: Everything that exists changes and evolves from one state to another. The child continues to grow while he is still young, then gradually reaches the peak of his youth, then declines in his health. So who brings about these changes in his state? It is obvious that he does not change his physical condition. So there exists something that programs these changes within him. Who can that be?

And so the series of questions continues. The rational mind cannot possibly accept any other answer to these questions except that there exists an initial cause of change who set in motion the process of change in the universe, and no one else besides Him can do so. That initial cause of change is the True Lord, glory be to Him. He says, 'To him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: How can He have a son when

has consort? He created all things, and He has full knowledge of all things.'

To clarify our point further, I will elaborate the preceding arguments in the form of the following dialogue:

You know that you have been created and that you came into being after a state of non-existence. Either you were created by an absolute state of non-existence that has no creator, or there is some other cause that indeed brought you into existence.

It is impossible to say that you were brought into existence by non-existence, hence there must be a creator. And this creator can either be you yourself or someone else. It is impossible for you to have created yourself. In other words, it is an obvious fallacy to suggest that you brought yourself into existence before you even existed.

Hence, there must be a creator other than you. And this creator must either depend on another creator or be independent of the chain of creation.

It is logically inconsistent to say that this creator who created you should be in need of another creator, for that would imply that everything that we have said about you applies to him as well. Therefore, this creator must be the Creator, Independent of all that exists, absolutely Self-Sufficient, not in need of a Creator. This is none other than Allah, the Eternal, the Independent.

Fifthly: As for the proponents of the idea that this universe came into existence by chance or by a series of reactions between elements that were present in specific conditions, in specific proportions, and at a specific time, and thus life began accidentally, spontaneously, I would like to say to them:

The phrase 'chance' is a mere descriptive analogy that does not answer the preceding questions. Let us suppose that you were walking along a road and you met a friend without any previous appointment. This chance meeting may be considered a possibility, and it would have been possible for you to meet some other friend too along the road, whether you arranged a meeting with him or not.

So who brought you and your friend together at that particular time in that particular place? If you were to meet another person instead of him, under the same circumstances, this would imply the fulfillment of another possibility. Let us suppose this possibility is indeed fulfilled, so who fulfilled it?

The 'who' part of this question remains unanswered, and it is this phrase, 'who', that the atheists hate.

So if the entire universe came into existence by chance, who created the chance itself? Who created the necessary elements and brought them together in specific proportions under specific circumstances and made them react in specific ways for that chance to occur? If the atheist were to say, 'I do not know', we would say, 'How did you arrive at the conclusion that the universe was created by chance?' If he were to say, 'The chance was created by another chance before it', we would say, 'This would necessitate an innumerable number of chance occurrences, for every element in this chain of reaction was brought into existence by chance. And for it to come into existence, specific conditions related to temperature, pressure, time, place, velocity, direction are necessary. If each one of these conditions was created by chance, and another chance occurrence brought all of these chance occurrences together for these various elements to form a chain reaction... this would necessitate an unending series of chance occurrences.'

And thus we would end up in an illogical series of questions: Who created the chance that created the first chance? And who created the chance that brought about the chance that created the eventual chance occurrence? And so on...

We would say to this atheist, 'We do not only ask you how the conditions pertaining to the chance occurrence were created, rather, we would like to know who created the chance itself? Who caused it to exist? Did the elements that were brought about by chance create themselves? Or were they created by another creator? Verily, Allah stated the truth, 'Were they created of nothing or are they themselves the creators?'

It is by the same logic that we may refute the argument of Julian Hexley, who gave the example of the six monkeys typing on a type writer. Who created the six monkeys? Who created the type writer? Who brought them together in one place? Who gave the monkeys billions of years to live? How did the type writer survive for billions of years without needing repair? Who provided the papers and placed them in the type writer? Who provided the ink and continued to provide it for billions of years? Who forced the monkeys to sit there for them to type for millions of years without getting bored? Did anyone force them to do so? Who was he?

This word, 'who', is what the atheists hate most, as I have mentioned earlier.

And if millions of years of aimless type writing produced just one poem of Shakespeare- as you would like to have us believe- how long would it take to produce all of his poems? How long would it take to produce the works of all English poets? How long would it take to produce the poetry and literary works of all the poets of the world? And so on...

If you suggest that out of the billions of pages of meaningless typewriting, one page containing a work of Shakespeare might emerge, this would imply that to create a single universe by chance would require trillions of distorted universes and billions of damaged copies for every single sound copy of anything that exists. In that case, the trillions of distorted, damaged, meaningless copies would be the overwhelming norm in existence. So where are they? Verily, Allah (swt) stated the truth, while you lied, 'Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion, and He has power over all things. He Who created death and life, so that He may try which of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving. He Who created the sevens heavens one above another: No want of proportion will you see in the creation of Allah, the Most Gracious. So turn your vision again: do you see any flaw?'

Some atheists, in their arrogance, claim that there exist parallel universes that are, unlike our universe, defective in their design, but we cannot see them. Let it be said that we attach no importance to their imagination and fictional suppositions. If you do not believe in the Lord Who has established the proof of His existence on the basis that He belongs to the realm of the Unseen, why do you expect us to believe in the fictions of your imagination?

Even within this universe, where are the billions of creatures that are defective? Why do you ridicule our common sense and lecture us on fictional universes? Is this then the end result of what you term 'scientific thinking'?

To those who say that the universe was created by chance and started functioning by itself in an automatic manner, it must be said: What you claim to be profound theories and sound ideas are nothing but random noises that came from your mouth or letters that came together by chance on pieces of paper and appeared in the form of your writings. The reality of your ideas is that they are purposeless, without any objective, and you never intended these ideas to be the way they are. The very ideas that emerge in your mind are the result of random chemical reactions in your neurons that occurred purely by chance and produced this nonsense.

Did this amazing universe that has been designed with stunning perfection come into existence by chance?! Yet you want us to believe that your thoughts and ideas are intentional, a result of deep reflection and based on solid principles, empirical evidence and undeniable conclusions? Your thoughts and ideas are objective and reveal the reality? Why should your thought be an exception to the workings of the entire universe?

Let us suppose that you caught a thief redhanded with his hand in your pocket. When the thief learns that you believe in the theory of creation by chance, he says, 'My hand entered your pocket by mere chance?' What would you say to him, 'Welcome, my brother in faith?' Or would you take him to the police. And if someone were to ask you, 'Why do you take him to the police?' Would you say to him, 'So that justice may take its course against this criminal thief who knows neither morals nor values?' Which justice, morals and values do you presuppose in the first place?

Justice demands the restoration of the right to the victim, so what then is a 'right'? And who is 'deserving of right' in a world that is chance upon chance and vanity upon vanity.

Moreover, justice demands a legal code, a Shariah, to secure it. The legal code must be based upon some form of morals or values. If everything is a random chance, and there exists no such concept as values or moral frames of reference except the given circumstances that came about by chance, which value system or morals can we refer to in our quest for justice?

The worshipper of 'chance' might try to dodge you by saying, 'Law and morals are what reasonable people agree upon'. This reply raises more questions than it answers, for example: what do reasonable people agree upon? That the universe was created by chance?! And how do they reach this agreement? By concensus or by the majority as in a democratic system? If things were to be decided by democratic norms, that might as well imply that the thief that we just mentioned, if he had only three other thieves with him and he met the worshipper of chance in a desert, the majority would reserve the right to rob and kill him. It is only then that the worshipper of chance will praise the true virtues of his 'chance' theory!

Justice demands adjudication between the claimants of the right. This requires a neutral judicial and executive authority that is not partisan in the least possible way. And this quality of absolute impartial justice

cannot be ascribed truly to anyone other than the Glorious Lord Who is Pure of all defects.

As they say, judgment about anything is derived from its general concept. It is impossible for the ruler to rule in a dispute unless he has a clear general concept of the issue at stake. The clearer his conception of reality, the closer his judgment to the truth. Since the ignorance of man about the universe, as agreed upon both by atheists and believers, is incomparable with the minuscule knowledge that he possesses about it, therefore, the only One Who is capable of arriving at the right judgment is the One Who truly knows: God, the Glorious, 'Should He not know, He Who created? And He is the One who understands the finest mysteries and is well-acquainted with them.'

Sixthly: And thus I say to the one who claims that life came into existence without any purpose: Your claim, which is part of existence, is equally purposeless. It is not a wise considered opinion, but nonsense upon nonsense.

Why do we see you bent upon wasting your time on your theories and refuting the arguments of your opponents if everything is indeed purposeless? Why don't you let your opponents simply waste their time on a debate that is, as per your logic, meaningless to its core?

Seventhly: To those who say that man evolved from a micro-organism, as suggested in the theory of evolution, and reached his current state through a long process of development, I would like to suggest: The purpose of my talk is not to explore the inherent weaknesses in your argument. However, I must ask you: If different parts of the universe did indeed evolve from one another, did the universe itself evolve by itself? Or is there someone or some force that evolved it? And just 'who' is that someone?

If a famous factory were to produce every year a new model of a product (car, computer, and so on...), there would be some resemblance between successive models. Similarly, on each model, you would find the logo of the same company. Can we possibly consider the succession of new models as evolution or does it point to the fact that the products all come from the same source?

Let us suppose that a fraudulent trespasser was to come to the owner of the factory and take him to court on the basis that the owner has no right to copyright his products and claim the profits for himself exclusively, since these products 'evolved' as a result of a random interaction between various elements, without any arrangement, intention, or planning. And on this basis the fraudster and the owner of

the factory have an equal right, or lack of it, to the profits of the factory, will this argument be accepted by any judge in the world, even if the judge were to be a secular atheist strongly adhering to Darwin's theory of evolution?

The question that is even more important is that isn't the Lord, glory be to Him, capable of creating Adam in Paradise and sending him to this world, irrespective of the evolution or non-evolution of other creatures?

Hence, the pivotal dispute between us is about God Himself, Whose very existence you attempt to deny, or at the very least refute His attributes.

This, then, is the real issue. This is what the conflict between Islam and disbelief has revolved around since times immemorial.

Eighthly: I would like to say to those who claim that the universe originated from matter: What is matter? Science has proven that matter, as a body that has weight and dimensions, may be turned into energy, and that matter is composed of atoms. These atoms are in turn composed of protons, electrons, and neutrons. The electrons control the direction, electric charge, wave lengths, radiation and other elements, and so on. Then there are the light-emitting photons that may take the form of waves or bodies, and heat which transfers from hot to cold bodies.

These bodies may dissipate, the radiation may weaken, and the heat may transfer from hot to cold bodies, as in the second law of thermodynamics.

So what precisely is your definition of 'matter'?

There are those who claim that matter is eternal and it existed before anything else, while others claim that matter and movement are eternal and there are laws that govern the behaviour of matter. I would like to say to them:

1. You disbelieve in the Unseen. However, when you disbelieved in the Eternal Lord, you were forced to believe in the unseen world in another form.

The scientific laws pertaining to motion and gravity and the concepts of eternal time, unending dimensions, eternal matter are generally concepts that cannot be physically felt or observed, in other words they belong to the realm of the unseen. In spite of this fact, no materialist can deny the existence of such laws and concepts, or else he would be a laughing stock.

We would later discuss how Doctor Abdul Wahab Al Musairi, in his journey from atheism to faith, understood that most scientific laws are based on philosophical presumptions, in which the scientist believes first before he goes on to establish them empirically. Hence the link between the 'law' and 'empirical evidence' is often whimsical or simply non-existent.

2. I would like to tell them: The believer and the atheist agree that everything in the universe is subject to change, and everything that changes must have an original state from which it begins. The believer believes that it is the Creator, glory be to Him, while the atheist believes that it is eternal matter.

Here, I must raise a basic question: Is this matter- in which the atheist believes- itself not a part of the created universe?

If he says 'yes', he contradicts himself.

The first contradiction: If we say that matter is part of the material universe, this would necessitate that a part of the material universe must have existed before the universe itself existed, which is a clear contradiction.

The second contradiction: For matter to be part of the universe, it must have a beginning, as proven by science. It must be subject to change and evolution, while the atheist claims for it eternity, which is again a contradiction.

The third contradiction: The atheist claims that matter is eternal, yet it is part of the universe, whereas the universe is not eternal. This again is an obvious contradiction.

If he says, 'No, it is not part of this universe; rather, what we mean by 'matter' is pure, absolute matter.

This would necessitate the existence of something outside this universe, which, we know, has a definite beginning and an end.

In this case, the atheist declares it permissible for us to believe in a world unseen. So why does he disbelieve in Allah on the basis that He belongs to the realm of the Unseen?

3. How do you establish the existence of this eternal and absolute matter?

If you say it is 'evidence', you contradict your own set of beliefs, which, you claim, are based on tangible reality alone.

You must admit that you believe in an unknown force that belongs to the Unseen and is not part of this universe.

And thus you disbelieve in Allah and worship your whims. Allah (swt), the Great, has truly said, 'Have you then considered him who takes

his vain desires for his god. Allah has, knowing him as such, left him astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart (and understanding), and put a cover on his sight. Who, then, will guide him after Allah has withdrawn guidance? Will you not then receive admonition?’

Ninth: I would like to ask the atheist about the laws that govern this universe. The first thing I must ask him: What does it mean for objects to observe ‘laws’? Does it not imply memory, coordination, and particular patterns of behaviour?

For example, if you were to enter a hospital and discover that all procedures are organized, what would you deduce? If you were to enter a huge city and find that the traffic moves smoothly, in an organized fashion, without any accidents, what would you deduce?

If you were to sit in an exam and write clear, concise, organized, fully comprehensible answers to all questions, and later discover that one of your classmates wrote illegible answers and the supervisor gave both of you the same grade, would you accept this result? Would you not consider it unjust of him to not distinguish between the organized and the anarchic, the accurate and the inaccurate, between the one who memorized and the one who forgot, and the one who intended to be accurate and the one who didn’t?

Thus it is impossible to think that these laws are not the result of a deliberate design, will, wisdom, and force that prevails over everything. Allah (swt) says, ‘And the sun runs its course for period determined for it; that is the decree of Him, the Exalted in might, the All-Knowing. And the moon, we have measured for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry date palm branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; each floats along in its own orbit.’

Secondly, I would like to say to him: Every law has a lawgiver and a body that governs over the process. For example, take the laws of football, which govern the scoring of goals, corners and penalties etc. Who frames them? A football federation, you might say. And who frames the laws governing the football federation? FIFA, for example, or the ministry of sports. And what is the source of the code of conduct to which the ministry of sports and its employees are subject? The law of employees and workers, for example. And who in the government frames the law of employees and workers? The parliament or senate? And what is the source of the laws governing the parliament’s procedures? The constitution? And what brought about the constitution? A referendum? And what gave legal authority to the referendum? The voice of the

majority of voters, for example. And what gave legal authority to the voice of the majority? Their desire for justice and sound governance, for example. And what framed their desire for justice and sound governance? Their minds. And who designed the functioning of their minds? And so the series of questions continues unendlessly.

Hence, there must be someone who initiates creation. He must be independent in himself and must not be subject to anything or anyone. He is the Lord, 'Say: Who is it in whose hands is the governance of all things, who protects all, but is not protected by any? Say if you knew.' And He says, 'Whatever it be wherein you differ, the decision thereof is with Allah.' This is why among the Names of Allah is *Al Hakam* or the Ruler of Adjudicator.

Here, I must ask the atheist: Who established the laws that govern the universe? If he says, 'It is eternity which has no lawgiver', he automatically makes it permissible for us to believe in an unseen force that is not part of the universe. Why then his denial of the Lord?

Thirdly, I must ask the atheist about this 'eternal matter' and 'the laws of nature' which, he believes, created the universe. Do these laws exist or not? Are they functioning? The answer has to be yes, for the force which governs life cannot be dead.

Does it create and design things and creatures from nothing? The answer has to be yes.

Does it give life and death? The answer has to be yes.

Does this force provide sustenance? The answer has to be yes, because it provided air, water, and food.

Is this force capable, coercive and all-prevailing? The answer has to be yes.

This matter, as you claim, generated the universe, which science has proven has a definite beginning. In other words, this force chose the existence of the universe over its non-existence. To be precise, this force possesses 'will' and can 'choose', is it not so? The answer has to be yes.

Does this force prevail over the will of other forces? The answer has to be yes.

Is this force all-knowing? The answer has to be yes, otherwise, how was knowledge bequeathed to us?

Does this force possess a memory? The answer has to be yes.

Does this force plan? The answer has to be yes.

Is this force the shirt and socks you wear and the pen in your pocket? Obviously, no! Since these objects are the end-result of other

processes and they have a beginning and an end. In other words, this creative force is distinct from the tangible material world.

Therefore, this force is present, alive, creative, artistic, life-giving, deadly, sustaining, capable, coercive, prevailing, willing, dominant, knowing, planning, and above all, distinct from the tangible world. If you had the courage, you would have said, '*La ilaha ilal Allah*' (There is no god but Allah)

Tenth: The materialistic paradigm fails to explain many of life's secrets.

What are emotions and feelings?

Why is man the only being that questions why he exists?

Why is man the only being that records its knowledge and transfers it to subsequent generations, thus making scientific and technical advancements possible?

Why does man willingly sacrifice for the sake of others?

Why does man feel within himself a strong urge to do good and a reluctance to commit evil?

Why does he have a 'sin complex'? And when he commits a sin, he remains restless until he is able to compensate for the wrong he committed?

What is the meaning of piety, helping the needy and oppressed?

What is the meaning of motherhood, fatherhood, of being a son or daughter and taking care of old parents?

What is the meaning of martyrdom for a righteous cause?

What is integrity, truth, impartiality, loyalty?

The materialist paradigm has no answers for these questions, since these questions cannot be answered in chemical or physical terms, specially since the material world is a world where the mighty prevails over the weak.

In fact, there exist material phenomenon which the materialistic worldview cannot explain.

For example, the phenomenon of uniqueness in fingerprints, the human iris and DNA. Similarly, the migration of fish and birds to places far away from their place of birth.

The adamant materialist think that science will one day unravel the secrets of these phenomenon. This is a vain attempt to pass the buck to the unknown. Perhaps science may never uncover these secrets, or perhaps discover some and remain ignorant of others. And who knows if science, like the proverbial camel that lives a thousand years, only to

remain ignorant in the end, is actually too ill-equipped to unravel these secrets.

Just consider how those who lay claim to scientific and empirical knowledge refer us to the the world of the unknown and the unseen!

Eleven: I say to the atheist: You claim that matter existed before thought, and that it is the first principle, eternal, while thought is merely one of its later manifestations. Shall we ask you: Were you present at the time when matter existed independently of thought? Definitely no.

I must then ask him: Do you possess, as proof of your claims, empirical, tangible evidence that can be established by the five senses?

The answer is obviously no. So how did you deduce these conclusions. His answer: Reason.

Hence, you proved the eternity and primacy of matter on the basis of a non-material, intangible proof, which is, in short, a clear contradiction with your beliefs.

Moreover, you claim that the mind, thought, emotions, all emerged from matter, and that these intangible things possess no weight or volume. So when man sleeps or dies, his weight and volume are not reduced. In other words, you have proved the generation of the immaterial from the material, which again is a contradiction with your beliefs, since you believe that the universe is composed of nothing except matter.

I shall suffice with this for now. In the next part of my talk, we will continue this discussion.

And our last prayer is that all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. And may peace and blessings be upon our master, Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu